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Message from the Mayor

Earlier this week I attended the International Conference of Shopping Centers (ICSC) in Las Vegas, Nevada, where major developers and retailers come to find new places around the country to bring new business. This is my last conference as Mayor. I've been attending this very productive conference for several years. In fact, when I first started going, very few mayors attended. Today, mayors from around the country attend.

One of the goals I set early on as Mayor was to bring retail and commercial services to the District's neighborhoods and our residents. Many District residents and businesses are often forced to buy basic goods and services—clothing, appliances, building supplies, home furnishings, etc.—in our city's suburbs. My goal was and continues to be to change that.

We've made tremendous progress recently toward keeping our "shopping dollars" in the District. Simply put, businesses are returning to our city in droves. They love our sustainable lifestyle. They love our transit-oriented neighborhoods.

The District is becoming an increasingly popular destination for major retailers. Over the past several years of attending the International Conference of Shopping Centers, our efforts have resulted in many store openings or letters of intent including:

- Home Depot; H&M Retail; Harris Teeter; Cost Plus; Whole Foods; Starbucks; Giant Food; The Container Store; Costco; Fresh Grocer; Bed, Bath & Beyond; CVS; Best Buy; Jos A. Banks; Target; the Gap; Trader Joe's; and Storehouse Furniture.

This opportunity has helped to create a real renaissance in the District. Residents are shopping in the District for what they need and want. Today, we see before us the result of smart planning and implementation by the community, business leaders, investors, developers, real estate brokers and the city government.

We've changed the conversation in the city and we've raised our expectations. Great things are happening, and great things are on the horizon.



AGENCY WEBSITES

[Department of Human Services](#)

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

[Hands on DC](#)

[DC Convention and Tourism](#)

[DC Public Library](#)

District Government's Efforts to Combat Welfare Fraud

During my weekly press briefing on May 17, I announced that the District government's efforts to combat welfare fraud have resulted in the recovery of more than half a million dollars from welfare fraud prosecutions.

We do not now nor will we ever tolerate welfare fraud. We want to ensure that people who need help and who are eligible for assistance receive that help. I commend staff at the Department of Human Services (DHS) and at the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) for working diligently to make sure that our city's resources are spent helping those who truly need assistance.

Since October 2005, DHS and OAG have been working to pinpoint those individuals who are defrauding the District of Columbia by illegally receiving public assistance, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, and Medicaid.

We're working to ensure our scarce resources are available for those who are playing by the rules and are not used by the few who deliberately commit fraud by lying about their income and residence.

To date, OAG has resolved more than 400 cases, a number of which were the result of the ability of DHS to access a federal data base of new hires. The database allows DHS to crosscheck the names and home addresses of clients receiving assistance from DHS against the names and home addresses of newly hired local, federal and private workers. The result of this partnership has been the recovery of more than half a million dollars.

OAG is aggressively pursuing those individuals who are defrauding the system by receiving welfare benefits when they are not residents of the District of Columbia or are intentionally failing to report salaries that clearly make them ineligible for assistance.

In addition to the prosecution efforts of OAG, DHS is launching a welfare fraud information campaign to let residents know about the consequences of committing fraud. The DHS Income Maintenance Administration will distribute a brochure on welfare fraud to residents receiving and applying for public assistance. The brochure provides information on how welfare fraud is identified, the legal and financial consequences, and how fraud can be prevented.

Ginnie Cooper Appointed to Lead DC Public Library

Last week, I announced the appointment of Ginnie Cooper as the new executive director of the DC Public Library (DCPL) to an audience of library trustees, staff, customers and Friends group representatives gathered at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library on May 18.

Joining me was John W. Hill, Jr., president of the DC Public Library Board of Trustees, who called a special public meeting of the trustees at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library to vote on Cooper's appointment prior to my announcement.

Ginnie Cooper is a nationally recognized and respected leader of urban library systems. In every city she has served she has put library patrons first and knows how to deliver the best in 21st century library services. She has a proven track record in programs and collections, technology, capital construction, fundraising, management and community involvement and the Board is confident that great things will happen at DCPL with Ginnie at its helm.

As head of the DC Public Library, Ginnie will oversee program management and services for the entire library system in addition to managing the Library Transformation Initiative. Her announcement is symbolic of the library transformation efforts proposed as a result of my Blue Ribbon Task Force on Libraries, which included DC Council Chairman Linda Cropp and Councilmember Kathy Patterson, as well as community, education and business leaders.

At the announcement, Ginnie Cooper said, "I am thrilled about the opportunity to join the DC Public Library at a time when so many exciting changes are on the horizon. Providing all library patrons with equal access to the best quality of service has been my passion for more than 30 years. I look forward to working with the Board of Trustees and library staff to create a world-class, state-of-the-art library system that offers innovative programming and services to the citizens of Washington, DC."



BRC Alerts

DCLMPC Partnership
Works!

DCOA Spotlight on Aging

DHS Outreach

DISB DC Financial
Gateway Express

OAG Inter Alia...

OAPIA Updates

OPGD Grant Funding
Alerts

New Health Club Benefit for District Government Employees

Physical inactivity and unhealthy eating are two leading causes of death in the United States. These two factors contribute to 310,000 to 580,000 deaths each year—13 times more than are killed by guns and 20 times more than by drug abuse.

The District is the largest employer in the city with no real fitness benefit for employees who have high health needs.

The Washington Sports Club has given us an opportunity to do something about our health. Last week, I announced a new health benefit offered to all DC Government employees. All city employees can join for \$39 per month. You can enroll online at www.companiesgetfit.com.

Good health adds up to a more productive workforce. And a more productive workforce equals an efficient government for the residents of our city. It's a win-win for us all!

Dedication of Woodrow Wilson Bridge

Last week I was pleased to join US Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta, Maryland Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., and Virginia Governor Timothy M. Kaine in the dedication ceremony for the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

This project is a great example of the power of partnerships. I am convinced that there is no substitute for working together to achieve important goals that can shape the way we conduct our lives.

Without question, clearing our roadways of congestion is critical to the health of the District of Columbia and the National Capital Region. The overcrowding of our roadways is burdensome and costly. According to one study, residents of our region are stuck in traffic nearly three full days every year.

This project is showing how we are using common sense to move people in our region efficiently.

As many of you know, the District of Columbia's Southeast neighborhoods on both sides of the Anacostia River are on the cusp of a renaissance. The new Wilson Bridge and I-295 work will significantly improve access to this flourishing part of the District.

Two weeks ago, we broke ground on the new home for our Washington Nationals along the banks of the Anacostia River. We are very excited that the stadium will open during the 2008 season, at approximately the same time as the second new Wilson Bridge.

As the city of Washington brings together the state of Maryland and the commonwealth of Virginia, so will the Wilson Bridge serve as a critical link that brings together people from throughout the region.

I look forward to our continued partnership with Maryland, Virginia and the federal government as we "unite the states."



District Activities



Mayor Williams, Councilmember Schwartz and Councilmember Evans participate in a school-to-school video conference, linking students from the District's McKinley Technology High School with their counterparts in Dakar, Senegal.



Mayor Williams tours Goree Island, off the coast of Dakar, Senegal.

Community News

- [Mayor Signs Nationals TV Legislation](#)
- [Mayor Praises Government Reform Committee Approval of Voting Rights Bill](#)
- [District Agencies Join Forces to Identify and Prosecute Welfare Fraud Criminals](#)

Upcoming Events

[View All News Releases](#)

5/21– 5/27	Severe Summer Weather Awareness Week For more information, visit the DC Emergency Management Agency website.
6/3	National Race for the Cure 6:45 am The National Mall (between 3rd Street, NW, and 7th Street, NW) You can register online at nationalraceforthe cure.org
6/21	Summer Kick-Off Noon Turkey Thicket Recreational Center 1100 Michigan Avenue, NE

